

***Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park  
Federal Advisory Commission Meeting***

June 20, 2013

Warren County Government Center  
220 North Commerce Avenue  
Front Royal, Virginia

- 1) General Introductions  
Patrick Farris
- 2) Report on the First 90 Days  
Jim Northup and Amy Bracewell
- 3) Update—Impacts of Sequestration/FTE Ceilings  
Jim Northup
- 4) Update—New Park Brochure  
Amy Bracewell
- 5) Update—Highway Directional Signs  
Amy Bracewell
- 6) Update—Opening and Operation of the New Visitor Contact Station  
Amy Bracewell
- 7) Update—Shared Graphic Identity  
Amy Bracewell
- 8) Development of a Shared Vision for Park Trails  
Amy Bracewell
- 9) Update—U.S. 11 Bridge Project  
Amy Bracewell
- 10) Update—Status of FAC Members/Nomination Process  
Jim Northup

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Jim Northup, Designated Federal Official (DFO); John Adamson, Belle Grove, Inc.; Katie Donahue, USFS; Patrick Farris, Warren County

and chair; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Richard Redmon, Strasburg; and Pam Sheets, Shenandoah County

Commission member absent: Mary Bowser, private landowner.

Others in attendance: Matt Armstrong, *Winchester Star*; Paul Coussan, Civil War Trust; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf; Amy Bracewell, NPS.

Chair Patrick Farris opened the meeting at 8:41 a.m. Farris asked that everyone present give their name and affiliation.

Jim Northup, superintendent of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and Shenandoah National Park reported that in the first 90 days he has met with all the partners, talked to the boards of supervisors of Warren and Shenandoah Counties, and met with the town of Strasburg. Amy Bracewell has been attending the senior staff meetings at Shenandoah NP. Northup has been spending one day per week at Cedar Creek, and thus far things appear to be running smoothly. Successful collaboration has taken place with administrative systems, budget and accounting, and IT support; the design charrette on shared graphic identity was enhanced by having two Shenandoah NP persons as well as the chief of interpretation participate. Northup and Nieweg also participated in a National Trust meeting on involving youth in preservation programs.

On sequestration Northup reported that FTE ceilings are being strictly enforced. Cedar Creek is currently at its ceiling of 6. Though the GMP calls for a staff of 14, the anticipation of a 3 percent cut in FY14 makes any additional staff unlikely. At Shenandoah, campgrounds and visitor centers are opening later than normal. Subject-to-furlough positions are being trimmed from 10.5 months back to six months. Though the future looks difficult, the staff is committed to educating the community and its leaders that the park will do everything it can. By judiciously using existing funds and Shenandoah NP personnel, work on planning for trails can begin.

Amy Bracewell spoke about the planning for the new park brochure. The park staff met with the HFC team on April 29. They discussed the overarching themes that the publication will portray, dealing with the entire story, not just the Civil War, and ensuring that visitors get an introduction to the park that is carefully nuanced. The HFC people will come to the park in late August with a proposal that all can talk about at the September 2013 FAC meeting. The schedule for having the new publication available for the 150th commemoration is still on track.

The park received notice from VDOT that half the requested signs have been approved for installation and told how an appeal may be made for those not approved. VDOT will replace all current Belle Grove, Cedar Creek Battlefield, and Wayside Theater signs with

the new ones. Currently the park is awaiting cost estimates for the approved signs so that installation can move forward. VDOT is also evaluating signs for the visitor contact station.

The visitor contact station is off to a good start. The dedication ceremonies were well attended, and in the first month 468 visitors were counted. The park is working with Shenandoah National Park Association to install a bookstore outlet.

The design charette on the shared graphic identity went very well. Claire Comer, Neal Lewis, and Matt Graves from Shenandoah gave an invaluable presentation on the worth of a branding element and what it could do for all partners. The hope is to find an illustrator with a history of dealing with logos to create several initial designs that all can react to. Rob Nieweg wondered if such an element might be available in time for the 150th commemoration.

A trails charette will be held June 26, led by Ursula Lemanski of RTCA to explore the topic. The idea is to talk about where trails might go, and where they should not go. The goal is to develop a few trails that can be done easily and quickly.

Representatives from the park and the partners met with a VDOT engineer to talk about the realignment of the U.S. 11 bridge over Cedar Creek. The proposal is to replace both current bridges with one new bridge. The partners would like to propose that VDOT place the new bridge on the footprint of the current northbound bridge and restore the southbound bridge, making it the focus of some visitor service activities. The goal is to retain the cultural landscape of the Stickley farm. Hill Studios, a landscape architect firm has prepared a proposal for review. The NPS will promote “Context Sensitive Design” in dealing with VDOT on this particular issue and others that may arise.

Jim Northup reported that the FAC has 15 members, each serving a three-year terms with the possibility of one renewal. Some new members may be needed, and others will need to have their second term approved. Here are the list of commission members with the dates of expiration of their terms:

John Adamson—September 2013  
Carl Bernhards—September 2013  
Mary Bowser—September 2012  
Citizen Interest Group—currently no member  
Katie Donahue—June 2016  
Patrick Farris—September 2013  
Jeanne Frink—March 2014  
Stan Hirschberg—September 2013  
Eric Lawrence—September 2013  
Rob Nieweg—September 2013  
Jim Northup—permanent member  
Nick Picerno—September 2013

Rick Redmond—March 2015

Pam Sheets—March 2012 (renewal letter in the Department)

### Other Business

Patrick Farris said that he would talk to the Warren County Board of Supervisors about a replacement for him.

Approval of the minutes was delayed until the September meeting.

Election of officers should be in September, so be thinking about candidates.

Northup expressed his thanks to Elizabeth McClung for her years of work.

The next meeting will be September 19, 2013, in the Strasburg Town Hall.

Chair Patrick Farris adjourned the meeting at 10:18.

### Handouts

Agenda

Talking Points for Bracewell Report